

Farm Labor Down, Wage Rate Up From Year Ago

Hired agricultural workers totaled 68,000 during the week of July 9-15, 2006, in the Lake Region (Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota), down 7,000 from the previous year. The average number of hours worked per employee was 38.4, compared to 40.9 in July 2005. The wage rate for all hired agricultural workers averaged \$10.22 per hour, up from \$9.66 the previous year. Livestock workers earned an average of \$9.72 per hour, up \$0.20 per hour. Field workers earned on average \$9.37 per hour during the week, an increase of \$0.71 from a year earlier.

U.S. agricultural operators hired 1.20 million during the week of July 9-15, 2006, down 11 percent from July 2005. Agricultural service workers accounted for 327,000 of this total. Workers directly hired by agricultural operators totaled 875,000, a 7 percent decrease from a year ago. The number of workers hired for 150 days or more was 630,000. Average number of hours worked for all hired workers was 40.9, up from 40.6 the previous year. Average wage rate for all U.S. agricultural workers was \$9.74 per hour, an increase from \$9.38 in July 2005. Field workers earned on average \$8.95 per hour, up \$0.34. Livestock workers average wage rate was \$9.56 per hour, a boost of \$0.30 from the comparable week in July 2005.